

Message Text

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UNCLAS TOKYO 07337

PASS KATHY ANN GRACE
PA BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE
408 SOUTH OFFICE BLDG.
HARRISBURG, PA 17120

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BPRO, EMIN, JA
SUBJECT: ANTHRACITE MARKET IN JAPAN

REF: USDOC HARRISBURG DISTRICT OFFICE CABLE 4/19/78

SUMMARY: THE LAST ANTHRACITE MINE IN JAPAN WAS
CLOSED BECAUSE THE DOMESTIC PRODUCT COULD NOT COMPETE,
EITHER QUALITY OR PRICE WITH IMPORTED ANTHRACITE.
DEMAND IN CY 1977 WAS ABOUT 1.5 MILLION MT, ABOUT HALF
OF WHAT IT HAD BEEN IN THE 1960'S. THIS DECREASE IS
PRIMARILY DUE TO INCREASED USE OF ALTERNATE MATERIALS,
E.G., KEROSENE FOR HOME HEATING. SINCE NO SIGNIFICANT
INCREASES ARE EXPECTED IN FUTURE DEMAND, US ANTHRACITE
MUST BE COMPETITIVE ENOUGH TO DISPLACE EXISTING
SUPPLIERS. END SUMMARY.

1. JAPANESE ANNUAL ANTHRACITE DEMAND (PRODUCTION PLUS
IMPORTS) WAS 2.7-2.9 MILLION MT IN THE 1960'S, BUT
DECREASED TO 1.1 MILLION MT IN 1975 AND 1976. (THERE
HAVE BEEN NO IMPORTS OF ANTHRACITE FROM THE US
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FROM 1960 TO DATE.) IN 1977, THE DEMAND INCREASED TO
1.5 MILLION MT PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF INCREASED DEMAND FOR
FOUNDRY USE COKE. RECENT PREDICTIONS BY THE MINISTRY
OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MITI), TRADING
FIRMS, THE STEEL INDUSTRY, AND THE GAS INDUSTRY INDICATE
THAT THERE WILL BE NO SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN FUTURE
DEMAND FOR ANTHRACITE.

2. OF CY 1977 IMPORTS 896,000 MT CAME FROM VIET NAM
295,000 MT FROM PRC, 142,000 MT FROM SOUTH AFRICA,
75,000 MT FROM CANADA, 40,000 MT FROM NORTH KOREA,
AND 38,000 MT FROM THE SOVIET UNION. AVERAGE CIF IMPORT

PRICES WERE \$49.66 (CONVERTED AT \$1 EQUALS 270 YEN) PER
METRIC TON FOR TOTAL IMPORTS, \$52.30 FOR THOSE FROM
VIET NAM, \$42.62 FOR CHINESE, \$56.55 FOR CANADIAN,
\$50.80 FOR SOUTH AFRICAN, \$45.66 FOR NORTH KOREAN, AND
\$28.39 FOR SOVIET. GAS COMPANIES HAVE CONTRACTED FOR
100,000 MT OF CANADIAN "CANMORE" ANTHRACITE IN 1978
AND 1979 AT \$62 CIF PER METRIC TON. IMPORT PRICES OF
HONGAY ANTHRACITE FROM VIET NAM FOR JFY 1978 (APRIL 1,
1978 - MARCH 31, 1979) SHIPMENTS ARE UNDER NEGOTIATION.
"HONGAY" COAL CIF PRICES FOR JFY 1977 SHIPMENTS WERE
\$67-68 PER MT FOR LUMP COAL AND \$44-45 PER MT FOR FINE

3. DEMAND IN JFY 1976 WAS 1,146 MT, OF WHICH 34.4
PERCENT WERE FOR THE STEEL INDUSTRY, 24.4 PERCENT FOR
BRIQUET MAKING, 15.6 PERCENT FOR CHEMICALS, 11.6 PERCENT
FOR CERAMICS, 10.3 PERCENT FOR FOUNDRY COKE, AND 3.6
PERCENT FOR OTHERS.

4. TWO MAJOR TRADING FIRMS TOLD US THAT THEY ARE NOT
LOOKING FOR NEW SOURCES FOR ANTHRACITE. THEY ADVISED
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THAT WHETHER US ANTHRACITE CAN BE MARKETED IN JAPAN OR
NOT DEPENDS ON ITS COMMERCIAL COMPETITIVENESS SPECIALLY
CIF PRICE. MANSFIELD

NOTE BY OC/T: PASSED TO ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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